G4/pacom
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INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: NAVAL CONSTRUCTION FORCES (NCF) ALIGNMENT STUDY

ISSUE: In coordination with the Marine Expeditionary Forces, determine type and level of support desired from NCF, in order to improve utilization of these units in support of the marine corps "total force in readiness" during peacetime.

BACKGROUND

As outlined in MARFORPAC msg 09041 FEB 01, RADM Shelton is currently operating under the joint authority of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Fleet Readiness and Logistics (N4) and the Chief of Civil Engineers. He has been chartered to head the Naval Construction Force Alignment Study in order to develop organizational alternatives to optimize the effectiveness of the NCF.

INFORMATION

In support of this study MARFORPAC has coordinated a comprehensive review of component NCF requirements. The information below was solicited to answer various questions raised by RADM Shelton. The answers, compiled from I and III MEF are submitted as supporting documentation for the NCF Operational Requirements Brief to CMC.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Supporting the MAGTF

a. Construction skills/training: in order to effectively operate during wartime and contingencies, NCF and USMC forces must coordinate their capabilities, understand their doctrinal relationships, and conduct routine construction training. In order to conduct effective training, NCF and USMC planners must coordinate training activities to include deployments. Exercises must be coordinated on both unit TEEP's. Benefits from such interaction will better align the skills of the units involved and promote information, technique, and idea sharing creating an effective combined work force in peacetime and contingencies alike. The following skills are worth mentioning:

(1) Bridging represents a major requirement in I and III MEF OPlans. Assault bridging assets/personnel are limited in the USMC. Current plans involve USMC engineers establishing assault bridging sites (utilizing ribbon bridge, MGB, AVLB assets) quickly to allow the maneuver forces to cross the obstacle/s and move forward. SEABEE units follow in trace of the maneuver forces and construct non-standard bridges to free-

up USMC tactical standard bridging. This is an essential task for the NCF in support of a MAGTF in an area with a heavy bridge requirement. They should be adept at design and construction and should have the capability of quickly developing Bill of Materials (BOMS) using a variety of construction methods in order to construct non-standard bridges at the assault-bridging site. This may be practiced during exercises with various elements such as the Engineer Support Battalions.

(2) Expeditionary Air Field (EAF) site preparation, construction of runways, taxiways, aprons and roads, installation of matting, construction of aircraft and personnel support facilities. In addition, EAF construction/refurbishment should be conducted jointly in order to compliment each other's strengths and ensure NCF engineers maintain proficiencies in EAF construction.

(3) Vertical construction is a requirement ensuring adequate life support of deployed forces in any contingency. During MTW OPlans, SEABEES are heavily involved in establishing unit assembly areas as well as forward operating bases.

(4) Beach improvements to include, construction of berms, egress routes, construction/improvement of marshalling areas and other expedient facilities

(5) MSR construction is a critical requirement that must be coordinated and practiced during exercises and as part of peacetime construction projects.

(6) Ammo supply point and bulk fuel storage facilities require earth-moving capabilities where SEABEES can support MWSS and ESB Engineers.

(7) All infrastructure construction and infrastructure maintenance-related naval units should fall under one navy commander, probably the senior NCF commander in the task force. Navy salvage units are good candidates for this arrangement as well. Sustainment (supply types, material handlers, etc.) should roll-up under the NCF commander.

(8) In the area of training, the following are additional skills the NCF should be proficient in or capabilities they should exercise to support the MAGTF:

- Rapid runway repair (RRR)
- Battle damage repair
- K-span and tension fabric structure construction
- Bunker and other heavy field fortification construction

- Advanced Base Functional Components (ABFC) site development and construction

b. Military training

The following describe additional NCR training requirements to meet the needs of the MAGTF:

- Communication interoperability
  - SEABEES comment that this is a crucial area of need for combined training
- Small arms training
- Defensive tactics
- Rear Area Operations (RAO)
- Executing the chop to/from the MAGTF commander
- Marines should act as subject matter experts on tactical matters during all NCF field exercises and military training.
- Chemical, Biological, Radiological (CBR)/Nuclear, Biological, Chemical (NBC) warfare training conducted by marines subject matter experts.

c. Exercises

(1) Increased NCF support to the MAGTF must also enhance NCF combat skills and organization. The NCF and USMC should consider including SEABEE involvement in Combined Arms Exercises (CAX's) in order to apply their construction skills in a simulated combat environment and to "train the way we fight." The NCF and USMC should also consider combining NMCB field exercises (FEX's) with USMC CAX's to refine SEABEE combat skills and integrate construction elements with maneuver forces. Amplifications are as follows:

(a) All major MAGTF exercises should include NCF units (NMCB's and UCT's). The level of participation should be such that the NCF units learn what is expected of them and the Marine Corps units learn the capabilities and proper employment of NCF units.

(b) Involve deployed NCF units Navy Mobile Construction Battalion's (NMCB's and UCT's) in major JTF exercises. Not only in HA and HCA projects, but also in CPX's and FEX's.

(c) Exercise the change of operational command (chop) of participating NCF(s) unit to the MAGTF commander. This will ensure that when executed for real, the timing, lines of communication, and responsibilities are established and understood.

(d) Have SEABEES enhance their contingency construction skills by supporting Marine Corps range and exercise sites with ABFC type construction. Include in these projects at least one COMEX/CPX involving Marines and SEABEES.

(e) Plan, fund, and execute Deployments for Training (DFT) in support of a MEU-SOC unit. This exercise could include an amphibious landing followed by a HA/HCA-type project. The link-up would be temporary, but the drill would greatly enhance interoperability.

(f) Develop DFT detachment sites at major JTF/CJTF exercise locations (such as Australia, Thailand and the Philippines) to execute Exercise Related Construction (ERC) projects in support of the exercise. This would provide NCF units the opportunity to enhance contingency construction/repair skills and participate in JTF/CJTF exercises.

(g) Maritime Pre-positioning Force (MPF) operations are a critical capability that must extend to SEABEE forces with the placement of NMCB equipment as part of the MPF enhancement package. MPF operations are very complex and challenging, requiring extensive coordination and training. The NCF and USMC should consider unloading SEABEE equipment during MPF exercises or major deployment exercises at the MEF and/or MSC level. Unloading SEABEE equipment during exercises such as Bright Star will increase NMCB's familiarity with MPT operations and allow for the opportunity of significant construction support to deployed forces, as well as providing a good engagement tool with coalition partners. Currently, I MEF participates in an annual Tri-MEF MPF exercise at Blount Island command. The Tri-MEF exercise provides MEF MPF personnel training in the procedures of MPF operations and provide for the development and application of uniform procedures and responsibilities of all the MEF's regarding MPF operations. Incorporating the NCF MPF planners/operators in MPF exercises would greatly enhance the NCF interoperability with the MAGTF during these operations.

d. Deployments

(1) MARFORPAC's wartime responsibilities include support to both PACOM and CENTCOM OPlans. Each OPlan is in support of a different CINC and has its own set of directed exercises. PACOM exercises include RSO&I, Foal Eagle, MEFEX, and UFL. CENTCOM exercises include Lucky Sentinel, Internal Look, Desert Knight, and Bright Star. Dedicated NCF planners working along side USMC planners are required to update and refine associated OPlan/TPFDD data and attend planning conferences for each exercise.

(2) USMC forces are routinely deployed in support of smaller scale contingencies and JTF operations with extensive vertical and horizontal construction. These missions would be greatly enhanced with the addition of NCF expertise. Recent examples include deployments in support of de-mining projects in Djibouti, refugee relief operations at Guantanamo Bay, and the construction of the Alaska road project. A closer relationship between the NCF and USMC would facilitate more effective and rapid cooperation.

(3) As a means of strengthening cooperation between the NCF and the USMC MAGTF, we should examine the basing of at least one NMCB at Camp Pendleton. Such a move would enhance the USMC NCF relationship, enhance planning efforts associated with deliberate engineering requirements, enable crisis action planning of emerging contingencies, facilitate planning of exercises and ease SEABEE involvement in exercises located on the base and 29 Palms/MAGTFC, and provide the MCBB with limited construction support. In order to base a NMCB at Camp Pendleton additional facilities, warehouse space, and billeting would be required. This would entail a review of NMCB forward deployment and detachment sites and the overall NMCB deployment scheme. **In addition, co-location of NCF and FMF units would provide opportunities for NCF project taskings that enhance contingency construction skills and improve ranges and training areas for the FMF, thus supporting the fifth element of the MAGTF.**

e. NMCB presence at USMC bases/stations: Home porting and/or deploying more NCF units to Marine Corps installations would reinforce the bonds between the NCF and the entire FMF. Marines and SEABEES must live, work, and train together in order to achieve the goals described above.

(1) For strategic as well as political reasons, the major deployment sites for NMCB's are currently at Guam, Okinawa, Rota and Roosevelt Roads and are not likely to change. There are, however, opportunities to develop detachment sites at Marine bases and stations, both in Conus and OConus. Okinawa is the premier deployment site for NMCB's to train with the Marine Corps. The training should always be focused on enhancing the construction skills and defensive capabilities of the NCF, as well as interoperability between the NCF and the Marine Corps.

(2) The US Marine Corps and SEABEES are inextricably linked as they have been since the inception of the SEABEES during World War II. MARFORPAC has an unequivocal and continuous need for an active, ready NMCB in Okinawa, Japan and Guam for the following critical factors:

(a) OPlan response - USCINCPAC and other bilateral/multilateral plans require the support of the NCF

during early stages to accomplish initial objectives. An NMCB forward deployed to Okinawa is essential to successful execution of these plans as it provides a focused, ready unit within the theater for rapid response to contingency requirements. Forward deployment also reduces reliance on critical strategic lift assets.

(b) Forward engagement - an NMCB deployed to Okinawa provides another asset to support USCINCPAC's theater engagement plan. Through DFT's to various countries in the region and presence in the communities of Okinawa and mainland Japan, the Okinawa NMCB supports and is involved with our friends in this critical part of the world. Participation in exercises such as Carat, Cobra Gold, and Tandem Thrust are important both for forward engagement purposes and as training for the SEABEES. The NMCB in Okinawa will be an even greater engagement tool as USCINCPAC implements its concept of expanded multilateralism.

(c) Forward presence - the Okinawa NMCB is also a critical force ready to respond to non-OPlan requirements in the AOR. Whether the requirement is peacekeeping operations, disaster response, or humanitarian assistance, the deployed NMCB is ready and positioned to respond.

(d) USMC/SEABEE connectivity - Okinawa provides one of the only opportunities for continuous interface of SEABEES with USMC units. Within each 28-month rotation cycle, four of eight active NMCB's will experience an extended deployment to Okinawa. During these deployments, the SEABEES and Marines will train together during field exercises and other training opportunities. They also participate jointly in exercises such as RSO&I, UFL, and Foal Eagle - training, as they will fight. These opportunities to train and exercise together provide the USMC with first hand assurance that the SEABEES are ready and can be counted on to perform.

(e) Contributory support - a side benefit of an NMCB deployed to Okinawa is the contributory support enjoyed by Marine Corps base Japan. Valued at over $26 million per year, the support provided by the deployed NMCB augments scarce installation operations resources. While this factor is not the reason SEABEES are in Okinawa, their contributions, especially to improvement of quality of life, is extremely valuable to the marines and sailors stationed overseas.

2. Structure

a. The banding of the NCF to the MAGTF will be greatly facilitated through the formulation of a MEF Engineering Group (meg). The MEG concept is currently being developed through working groups sponsored by I MEF. The proposed MEG concept will assign 3rd NCB as the MEG headquarters for deliberate planning in support of OPlans and activation during execution of one of the major war plans. The MEG will include SEABEES, MARFORRES, and U.S. Army Engineer staffs and units; this totals up to approximately 11,000 additional engineer personnel for I MEF. During contingencies, the MEG will be assigned as a separate Major Subordinate Command (MSC) within the MEF organizational structure. Thus, the MEG commander (3rd NCB Commander) will have a direct link to the MEF CG and his staff. The 3rd NCB, as the MEG HQ, will provide the MEF CG an Engineer Flag Officer and robust engineer staff to coordinate all non-organic engineer activities for the MEF. The MEG concept provides a great avenue to better "band" the NCF and USMC forces together. Although the MEG in its current development is activated during the execution of one of the major OPlans, the concept could be tailored to support smaller scale contingencies.

b. Inherent with the 3rd NCB being assigned as the MEG is the closer operational relationship the NCF and the MAGTF will gain. The intent is that 3rd NCB, as the MEG, will participate in the deliberate planning of OPlans, to include OPT's, TPFDD development, TRAMSCOM TPFDD conference, etc. This will assist in enhancing the MAGTF in better understanding and properly employing the NCF units, as well as the NCF enhancing their understanding of the MAGTF.

c. Reserve structure; Interoperability with the USMC Reserve

(1) Augment MEF staffs with NCF reservists. NCF senior enlisted and officers could work to develop training plans and OPlans with the MEF staff. Other SEABEE reserve units could be tasked with specific construction projects in support of the MEF (range repair, exercise area upgrades, etc.).

- Seabee input is that CEC reservists may not have enough time to dedicate to this level of effort.

(2) Marine reservists could augment the NCF staffs at the brigade, regiment and battalion level to develop training plans and provide training that would exercise the NCF's ability to communicate and operate within a MAGTF environment.

(3) Introduce the existence, capabilities and employment of the NCF to marine officers assigned to inspector-instructor duty. These Marines could then use this information in planning and pass it on to the reservists they train.

3. Interoperability

a. Logistics: Train both marine and NCF units on each other's logistics systems and procedures, with special emphasis on capabilities, similarities and differences. NCF embarkation personnel should get better/more TPFDD training and exercise this training in a realistic scenario involving support for a contingency/contingency plan.

b. Communications: Naval construction regiments should develop training plans that include joint command, control and communication (C3). This training should be conducted at least semi-annually, once while in homeport and once while deployed.

c. Weapons: Educate USMC personnel on NCF weapons Table of Allowance (TOA) (T/E). Marine Corps personnel should be trained on NCF defensive capabilities and limitations with respect to both individual weapons and war fighting in general. The NCF must ensure that all personnel are properly trained in the use and care of assigned weapons.

d. Uniforms

(1) It is generally agreed that the NCF should maintain their utility uniform as long as it remains functional. As the services develop better uniforms, this should be reevaluated. The top priority of the uniform should be functionality.

(2) Seabee input and one marine officer commented that SEABEES and marines wearing the same uniform would make the two units look more alike and thus facilitate their thinking of each other as members of "one team".

(3) All war fighting equipment (such as weapons, tactical radios, CBR/NBC protective gear, etc.) Should be interchangeable between the NCF and the Marine Corps.

e. Maintenance: Marine Corps and NCF personnel currently train jointly on equipment maintenance at Ft Leonard Wood, MO. This training should be continued at the operational maintenance shop level to the maximum extent practical. Both Marine Corps and NCF maintenance shops could be augmented with personnel from the other service. This would give valuable hands-on training, especially in the area of ordering and receiving replacement parts.

f. Security: NCF units have the ability to provide limited self-protection at their base camp and project sites. This is an area in which the NCF could gain valuable training and experience from the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps must realize that as security requirements are elevated within a NCF unit, construction/maintenance production rates will decrease.

h. A detailed examination of SEABEE T/E and combat expertise should assess issues such as major weapons systems (**81mm** mortars), command and control capabilities (sincgars), demining capabilities, chem-bio clean-up capabilities, and perimeter defense capabilities.

i. The NCF should develop TTP's along with the Marine Corps as well as participate in the USMC POM cycle to insure we have common weapon systems, logistical procedures, and maintenance procedures. The closer the NCF aligns itself with the Marine Corps the easier future coordination and operations will be.

4. Many of these recommendations are in effect to varying degrees at different locations. Practicing joint planning and interoperability is the only way to ensure that SEABEES and Marines are prepared to carry out MAGTF missions as a cohesive, well-coordinated team.

5. Points of contact for this matter are LtCol(s) G.S. Thomas, DSN 477-8470/comm (808) 477-8470 or Maj T.A. Holmquist, DSN 477-8473/ comm (808) 477-8473.